

EXHIBIT 16

**Secretary Kristi Noem**

@Sec_Noem



Today, I am revoking Joe Biden's extension of Venezuelan Temporary Protected Status that Secretary Mayorkas forced through at the very end of the administration.

This program was abused, exploited, and politicized. No more immigration schemes that make Americans less safe.

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CNN News Central

Interview with Kristi Noem, Homeland Security Secretary: President Trump Signs Laken Riley Act Into Law; Trump Administration Offers Buyouts to 2 Million Federal Workers; Democratic Ex-Senator Bob Menendez Sentenced to 11 Years in Prison. Aired 3:30-4p ET

Aired January 29, 2025 - 15:30 ET

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[15:30:00]

KRISTI NOEM, HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY: People's lives were lost because criminals, dangerous criminals, were allowed to be released back into the United States to perpetuate more crime. So it also allows states to go after civilly federal officials that let these criminals go, that turn them back on our streets to endanger more families. So I'm really thankful that that was added through the amendment process and that it is something that is a tool for states to hold some accountability to the federal officials that allow these things to happen.

BORIS SANCHEZ, CNN HOST: Well, I ask you about the protections because opponents have argued that they're not actually spelled out in this bill. So in theory, if someone was simply arrested for shoplifting, just arrested, not convicted, their case wasn't adjudicated, they could be detained without bond for the duration of their proceedings. Does that raise concerns to you about due process?

NOEM: Well, what we need to remember is all these individuals came into our country already and broke our federal law. They broke our federal law and then they perpetuated another crime. So they will be detained and they will get due process and they will go through our judicial system.

And we will make sure that when they commit these types of crimes, they'll be held accountable to that. So this bill is moving forward in a way that has Republican support, bipartisan support.

SANCHEZ: And Democrats, sure.

NOEM: It was great to see senators. It will be amazing to -- go ahead.

SANCHEZ: As far as what the bill spells out, though, these aren't individuals that have been determined, some of them to have committed crimes. You could simply be accused of shoplifting, accused, suspected of shoplifting and then get deported. So how does that fit into what you're describing? Because they could be detained almost indefinitely until their status is adjudicated.

NOEM: Well, I think if you look at the situations, they've already broken a law, then they've come in and perpetuated and been accused of another broken law. And they will be detained until that is moving forward. And we have a resolution to that process and that crime.

You know, this is a bill that people have agreed on that is necessary in this country because of what we saw happen under the Biden administration. So it has wide support. The president was proud to sign it today.

And these families that lost their children to tragedies, they were thrilled to see some results from those tragedies come for the better good of the United States of America.

SANCHEZ: I do ask, I want to ask you about how this sort of detainment is going to be funded. There are some estimates that have this new framework for detainment costing something like \$83 billion over the next three years. The bill doesn't outline how exactly that's going to be funded. So I wonder where is that money coming from.

NOEM: Well, to start standing up some of these detainment centers, we're using operations and budget that we already have in place, but we will need more help. We will need more dollars from Congress. And the reconciliation process is going to be utilized to have that debate on the Capitol Hill.

We've got senators and representatives that recognize that in order to do this and to fix the situation that the Biden administration perpetuated, we're going to need the resources not only to incarcerate and go out and get these dangerous individuals off our streets. We're going to have to detain them, put them through a process to repatriate them back to their home countries. And for me, we really need to focus on fixing our legal immigration system as well.

I need more resources to have our judicial courts and immigration courts resourced up that we have more judges so that when people want to come to this country legally, they can do that in a timely process.

SANCHEZ: So how many of those that have been arrested since these crackdowns began have been felons? How many have had felonies versus misdemeanors? In other words, how many folks have actually been convicted of crimes versus how many of them have just been in the country without documentation?

NOEM: Many of these individuals that we have done targeted operations to go find and to bring into custody do have felonies against them. They're the murderers, the rapists, the worst of the worst. And I think you've probably heard many other people talk about the fact that these are going to be the worst first, will be the ones that will be held accountable and pulled off of our streets.

And it was amazing when I was in New York City yesterday, just the community members that were constantly walking by, a lot of these individuals and officers that were going after these bad criminals were saying, thank you. Thank you for making our streets safe again. Thank you for being here and making sure that we can walk our kids to school again safely, that we can go to work safely, and that our community will be better because of what we're doing here today.

SANCHEZ: But undoubtedly, you said many, but it doesn't sound like you have a specific number for how many have actually been felons and how many have had misdemeanors for not having documents, something that in the United States is prosecuted as a civil matter.

[15:35:00]

NOEM: Well, I'll tell you that what we are doing is targeting those felons, targeting those that have violent acts and have broken crimes. But also when we're going into these situations, perhaps into an apartment to get somebody that is on our list that needs to be removed from that community to make it safer. There are people that are in that apartment with them. We're talking to all of those as well and vetting to see who they are.

Sometimes we have found apartments and facilities that have children and families there that we're talking to them to see who they are and make sure that they aren't children who are being trafficked, that they're truly with family members, that they're in a situation where they're hanging around dangerous criminals.

We want to make sure that they're not people who are a part of that chain that is funneling drugs or weapons or perpetuating some of these crimes in our communities. So that evaluation and those numbers is changing every single day based on who's around these criminals and who's around those dangerous individuals.

SANCHEZ: But as you are conducting these sweeps, there undoubtedly have to be occasions where someone who has not committed a felony is getting swept up and perhaps that's a person who has been law abiding and who has been in this country perhaps for decades and who contributes through paying taxes. Do they also deserve to be deported if they've lived most of their lives in the United States?

NOEM: You know, every situation is different and I won't speak to every single situation and every single operation we've had where our officers have gone out into these targeted operations. But what I will say is, of course, we do the due diligence that law enforcement always has been. We ask questions. We see who they are. We ask for their paperwork. We ask for their I.D. We're just making sure that these individuals are people who love this country, who obey our laws and that the scales of justice are applied equally.

You know, we expect our American citizens to obey our laws. Even people who aren't our citizens should be obeying our laws and that's the process we're going through that law enforcement always has.

SANCHEZ: Some of those folks may have had status at one point but then lost it. And I do wonder, for example, the administration announced this morning that TPS protections for Venezuelans are being rolled back. By our count, there's something like a half a million, more than half a million that stand to be affected.

By Saturday's deadline, are they going to lose protected status? Does that make it more likely that they will get deported?

NOEM: Well, you know, one of the decisions that was made recently is that in the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Mayorkas put in place an 18-month extension of the temporary protective status. I rolled that back. I rolled it back to the six months that it always has been. And he really put that in place to tie my hands. My ability to keep integrity into this program.

So this program has been in place for years. We're going to make sure that it's used properly and that's the president's heart and desire as well. So when the president gives a directive, the Department of Homeland Security will follow it and we're going to make sure that those who come in under a program, under a visa, and are here in this country, that they're following the rules of that program. That's been abused over the years and it needs to be fixed.

So those folks who are in violation of these programs, they need to recognize that they're accountable to that. They agreed to follow the rules when they came and that they need to be held accountable when they don't follow them.

SANCHEZ: But if they are following the rules of a program that you have deemed to be illegitimate, does that still put them at risk of being deported even if they are following those rules?

NOEM: You know, we are getting direction on how this works from the direction of the president of the United States. And he is pausing this program to re-evaluate. We know that it has been abused in the past and that there's many people from other countries that are affected as well from this TPP program. And we're going to make sure that we fix it so that it's utilized in the right way.

SANCHEZ: Lastly, Secretary, I do wonder if there are protections in place for people who are here legally. I think of family members of my own that don't speak English very well, hardly at all. Are there protections in place to prevent against racial profiling?

NOEM: Oh, absolutely. Yes, absolutely. These folks can live in peace knowing that all of their willingness to come to this country legally and to be here, we welcome them with open arms.

That's America's story and something that we're proud of. So I understand that the American people clearly sent a message in November that they wanted this country to be a nation of laws. That's what the president's following through on. And transparency is going to be our hallmark. People need the answers to their questions. And that's what I'm here for, is to make sure that they understand that we love this country.

We want our citizens to feel comfortable and at peace and to have their safety and their streets back again.

SANCHEZ: Secretary Kristi Noem, we have to leave the conversation there. Appreciate you coming on and sharing your perspective. We hope to chat again soon.

NOEM: You bet. Thank you.

SANCHEZ: Stay with CNN NEW CENTRAL. We're back in just moments.

[15:40:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SANCHEZ: In another shake-up by the Trump administration, federal employees working from home are now faced with the choice of returning to the office full-time or taking a buyout.

JESSICA DEAN, CNN HOST: The White House is offering voluntary resignations in a move President Trump says is designed to shrink and reform the government. Employees received an e-mail with the subject line, fork in the road, and were told if they wanted to leave, to simply respond with the word resign by next Thursday. Then they would receive severance payments through September 30th. President Trump addressed the buyouts this afternoon.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

[15:45:00]

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We have informed the federal workforce, which they've looked to do for many years, that if they're working for the federal government, they must show up to the office on time and on schedule.

It's unfair to the millions of people in the United States who are in fact working hard from job sites and not from their home. As federal employees, they must meet a high standard. They're representing our government. They're representing our country.

If they don't agree by February 6th to show up back to work in their office, they will be terminated and we will therefore be downscaling our government.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DEAN: Joining us now is the president of the National Federation of Federal Employees, Randy Erwin. Randy, thanks so much for being here with us this afternoon. I first just want to get kind of the top lines, what you've heard from members about this surprise announcement.

RANDY ERWIN, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES: I think they're surprised by it. I mean, I think we knew that Trump wanted to downsize the federal workforce. This so-called Doge thing was talking about that at length. So we knew some of this stuff was coming.

But, you know, they got this unique thing, this deferred resignation. You know, just very strange implementation of this. It doesn't make a lot of sense, but we are advising our members not to accept this. This is not a good deal for federal workers. It's not really even an offer to not have to work until September 30th.

You would resign, but you would still have to work. So I don't know what kind of a deal that is. But, you know, also in the verbiage of what they kind of, you know, put out to everybody, not even a name on who this e-mail is coming from.

So, you know, what a strange thing. Just hit, you know, reply, resign. I mean, who does things this way?

But, you know, bottom line is it's a bad deal. We're telling them not to do it. And it's really irresponsible to run federal government that delivers such critical services to the American people in this manner.

SANCHEZ: Randy, can you give us an estimate of how many of your 110,000 members might take the offer? And what agencies do you think might be the most affected?

ERWIN: I don't think we have any way of knowing right now. I wouldn't be surprised if 5 percent did or so like that. And what was your second question?

SANCHEZ: Just which agencies, which federal agencies do you think might be most impacted?

ERWIN: Yes. Well, you know, they did this throughout the federal government. So that's incredible.

You know, about one third of the federal government is the Department of Defense where we have about 50,000 members. You know, boy, what a hit to our, you know, readiness in the military if we see people taking resignations en masse. I mean, they talk about federal workers like they're not doing anything.

You know, 87 percent of federal workers are spread throughout the country. They're not here in Washington. They're doing critical services, keeping our military ready.

The next biggest agency is Department of Veterans Affairs, 370-some- thousand workers, nurses and doctors, people we represent that care for the American veteran. If these people leave en masse, we lose the ability to make good on our promise to care for the American veteran. And they're just putting out e-mails asking people to resign en masse. It is clear that they don't care about how our government functions and delivers those services.

DEAN: Is there concern about the funding for these buyouts?

ERWIN: Absolutely. I mean, another reason that we are advising our members not to accept this deal is because there's a good chance they're going to get stiffed. You know, they would essentially be signing away their rights, signing away their job, and then when the administration has to deliver on their promises, they will renege on that because Congress never authorized it.

So you don't, you know, make offers like this. This is not the way you run the federal government, and it's just highly irresponsible. And in the end, it's the American people that are going to suffer because of it.

SANCHEZ: Randy, I'm curious to get your reaction to not only the characterization that President Trump had of folks who are working from home, essentially calling them unproductive, but also the demand in this letter that states that federal workers should be reliable, loyal, trustworthy, and striving for excellence in their daily work. What did you think of that?

ERWIN: You know, it's absolutely chilling. You know, we kind of had, you know, federal employees swear an oath to uphold the Constitution and in a non-bipartisan way carry out the critical duties, you know, in the federal service. It's tremendous work they do.

But, you know, in this kind of deferred resignation offer that they put out, they said there's going to be some changes coming.

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There's a big fork in the road, and we are going to demand loyalty and trustworthiness, and if you're not delivering on that, you will be targeted for retribution and removal. And, you know, this is -- I've never seen anything like this.

And people really need to understand that independent civil service that carries out, you know, the laws of this country is absolutely a critical pillar to our democracy. And, you know, if Congress allows this to continue, if, you know, if they're, you know, if Congress allows this to continue, they are going to just, like, antagonize workers and break the law and do the things that it's clear that they're doing. And some of the things we know they're going to do they haven't even done yet, but we saw it in Project 2025 and things like that, or they did it in the previous administration.

But, you know, we can't go down this road. It's a critical pillar of our democracy to have a civil service that works for

the American people, and they are trying to tear that down. They're trying to do it right now, and people should be in the streets mad about it.

DEAN: All right, Randy Erwin, we'll leave it there. Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it.

ERWIN: Thank you so much.

DEAN: We have some breaking news to share with you. Former New Jersey Democratic Senator Bob Menendez sentenced by a federal judge to 11 years in prison.

SANCHEZ: This comes after his conviction last year on bribery and corruption charges. CNN's Kara Scannell was in court for the sentencing. She's been tracking this story throughout.

Kara, take us through what you saw. What was the former senator's reaction?

KARA SCANNELL, CNN CORRESPONDENT: So the former senator did not betray any emotional reaction when the judge handed down that sentence of 11 years, but he did address the court before the judge did issue the sentence. And during that time, Menendez told the judge that he was standing before him as a chastened man. He said that every day I'm awake is a punishment. I lost everything I ever cared about. At various times, he became choked up, having to stop when he was

speaking, talking about the ways he had helped certain constituents over the years and the achievements that he had achieved for not only himself but the Hispanic community, he said, through his election.

But as the prosecutors had said to the judge, that at some point Menendez had turned that public service into service for himself.

And as the judge handed down this 11-year sentence, he said, you've done a great deal of good. Somewhere along the way, you lost your way. Your working for the public good became working for your good. The public cannot be led to believe that you can get away with bribery, fraud, and betraying his voters, his constituents.

So a big sentence here. Prosecutors have been asking for at least 15 years. Menendez initially came into court saying he was to do community service. But even they acknowledged after seeing the sentences of other co-defendants, they had asked the judge for less than eight years. Judge finding 11 years in prison for Senator Menendez -- Boris, Jess.

DEAN: All right, that breaking news for us. Kara Scannell, thank you very much for that. And stay with CNN. We'll be right back.

[15:55:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SANCHEZ: NASA has remained insistent that these folks are not stuck, and yet their space mission was only supposed to last a week. Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams have been there since June.

DEAN: Longer than a week.

SANCHEZ: Longer than a week because of an issue with their spacecraft, and apparently President Trump says that he's had enough.

DEAN: Take a look at this exchange between Trump and Elon Musk. Trump tells Musk to, quote, go get them. Musk replies to Trump telling him he'll bring them home.

But in the most recent delay, it was his own company, SpaceX, that delayed the astronauts' plan return back in December with Musk's company saying it needed more time.

And joining us now is former NASA astronaut Leroy Chiao. Leroy, great to have you here with us. Thanks so much. The plan by NASA has clearly been delayed several times. The vehicle to bring them home is docked at the space station. Walk us through the complications here.

LEROY CHIAO, NASA ASTRONAUT (RET.): Well, sure. I mean, the next crew to launch, Crew 10, is going to be launching on a brand new Dragon spacecraft built by SpaceX. And so it's taking a few more extra weeks to go through testing, final testing, and mission assurance. And that's being done jointly by NASA and SpaceX. Crew 9, which Suni and Butch became a part of after their ride home

wasn't going to make it, they are waiting to come down. Of course, normally we would launch Crew 10, and they would spend about a week together before Crew 9 came back.

But they could come back earlier. Their spacecraft is ready to go. It serves as a lifeboat during their mission. And so if

something happens, or if they're told to, they can easily get into that vehicle and come down very quickly.

SANCHEZ: Leroy, I wonder whether the Biden administration could have done more to get them down, because that's who Donald Trump and Elon Musk are blaming for them being up there.

CHIAO: Well, the situation is that, you know, it kind of made sense. Once things evolved and it was clear the Starliner should not be used to carry them back, it was decided that they would join the next crew, right, that was about to launch. And so that's why two members of that crew were removed.

They were already up there. And then it was decided that they would stay for the entire mission duration. However, they could have come down earlier. And really what happens is if they come down early is they would disrupt the workflow aboard the station, because now you would leave one American on board and you would have three Americans come back with a Russian, four people coming down on that spacecraft.

And if that's the decision that will be made, then, you know, some research will be deferred or delayed. And, you know, we're at this point, we're near the end of the mission, so coming back a couple months early shouldn't be a huge, huge impact if that's what happens.

DEAN: And just quickly before you go, look, they've been up there since June. I know we've talked before. You said they can handle this. But at a certain point, it probably feels like it's time to come home.

CHIAO: Well, you know, there's no question, certainly personal and perhaps future professional plans are disrupted by this unexpected delay. You know, seven to 10 days turned into seven or eight months, right?

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And so I'm sure a part of them is looking forward to maybe coming home a little early, but at the same time, they're consummate professionals and they're ready to stay up there and finish all the work.

DEAN: We look forward to welcoming them back.

SANCHEZ: Yes, I hope they didn't have to keep flipping their underwear inside and out. Laundry in space, I hope. Leroy Chiao, thank you so much.

DEAN: Yes, I don't know how that would take a tour while you do that.

SANCHEZ: Let's save that conversation for "THE LEAD" with Jake Tapper, which starts right now.